

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress

1st Session

Vote No. 313

July 20, 1995, 2:31 p.m.

Page S-10373 Temp. Record

LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS/Campaign Finance Reform

SUBJECT: Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 1854. Dole motion to table the Feingold amendment No. 1803.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE FAILED, 41-57

SYNOPSIS: As reported, H.R. 1854, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1995, will appropriate \$2.19 billion, which is \$200.4 million (8.4 percent) less than was appropriated in fiscal year 1995, and which is 16 percent less than the President's request. The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) will be abolished, the General Accounting Office will be cut by 25 percent over 2 years, and Senate committee funding will be reduced by 15 percent.

The Feingold amendment would express the sense of the Senate that "as soon as possible before the conclusion of the 104th Congress, the United States Senate should consider comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation that will increase the competitiveness and fairness of elections to the United States Senate."

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Dole moved to table the Feingold amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

NOTE: The Senate subsequently agreed to a Dole amendment to the Feingold amendment (see vote No. 314), and then agreed to the Feingold amendment, as amended, by voice vote.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

We agree that one of the reasons that the American people gave Republicans control of Congress in a sweeping electoral victory in 1994 was to reform the corrupt congressional system that had evolved under 50 years of Democratic control. Certainly part of that expected reform was to change the campaign financing system. Other reasons for that victory included Republican promises to balance the budget, strengthen defense, cut spending, lower taxes, cut regulation, reform welfare, reduce the size of the Federal Government, crack down on crime, and stand up for family values. Republicans have been working determinedly to live up to those

(See other side)

YEAS (41)			NAYS (57)			NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (41 or 76%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)		Republicans (13 or 24%)	Democrats (44 or 100%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (2)
Abraham	Gregg		Brown	Akaka	Johnston		Biden- ^{4AN}
Ashcroft	Hatch		Cohen	Baucus	Kennedy		Inouye- ²
Bennett	Hutchison		Domenici	Bingaman	Kerrey		
Bond	Inhofe		Hatfield	Boxer	Kerry		
Burns	Kempthorne		Helms	Bradley	Kohl		
Campbell	Kyl		Jeffords	Breaux	Lautenberg		
Chafee	Lott		Kassebaum	Bryan	Leahy		
Coats	Lugar		McCain	Bumpers	Levin		
Cochran	Mack		Pressler	Byrd	Lieberman		
Coverdell	McConnell		Snowe	Conrad	Mikulski		
Craig	Murkowski		Specter	Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
D'Amato	Nickles		Thompson	Dodd	Moynihan		
DeWine	Packwood		Warner	Dorgan	Murray		
Dole	Roth			Exon	Nunn		
Faircloth	Santorum			Feingold	Pell		
Frist	Shelby			Feinstein	Pryor		
Gorton	Simpson			Ford	Reid		
Gramm	Smith			Glenn	Robb		
Grams	Stevens			Graham	Rockefeller		
Grassley	Thomas			Harkin	Sarbanes		
	Thurmond			Heflin	Simon		
				Hollings	Wellstone		

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

promises, and substantial progress has been made, including in reforming Congress. For example, a bill has already been enacted to make Congress live under the same laws as it imposes on everyone else, and legislation to reform gift and lobby rules is scheduled for consideration in a couple of days. However, especially in the Senate where any one Senator can delay matters, Republicans have not had a free hand. Democrats have had numerous suggestions, and have shown great willingness to debate many details great and small over extended periods of time. The Senate has been in session nearly constantly, and has already had more than 300 votes, but Republicans are far from completing action on their entire agenda. Republicans do not begrudge Democrats for their behavior--Democrats were not elected to push Republican principles.

Our point is that campaign finance reform is only one of many items that Republicans hope to consider this year, time permitting. Given Democratic behavior, it is unlikely, especially in the Senate, that it will be possible to consider all items on the agenda. In deciding which items to pursue, priorities are going to have to be set. In setting priorities, it will be necessary to consider the importance of the legislation, the time it will take to consider it, and the likelihood that it will pass.

The pending Feingold amendment simply states that the Senate should consider campaign finance reform this Congress. This statement is true enough, but by only mentioning one item that should be considered it leaves the false implication that considering this one item is the most important priority for this Congress. Based on the above 3 criteria it clearly is not. On the first criterion, importance, we note that campaign finance reform was not even mentioned in the Contract With America. We agree the issue is important, but its absence from the Contract clearly shows that it is not our top priority. On the second criterion, time, we know from previous experience that campaign finance reform is an extremely contentious issue that is subjected to intensive debate. On the third criterion, chance of becoming law, we know that all past efforts at campaign finance reform have resulted in partisan bills which favor whichever party happens to be in the majority. Both Republicans and Democrats have always been guilty. We suspect, therefore, that the end result of any campaign finance reform this Congress will be a bill that concentrates on eliminating abuses that mainly benefit Democratic candidates. President Clinton would likely veto such a bill, and Democrats would have enough votes to sustain it. Thus, by all 3 criteria, it would be hard to argue that campaign finance reform is the top priority that should be considered by this Congress.

For years we have argued that the best way to deal with this issue would be by setting up a neutral commission to recommend changes. We somehow need to get partisan politics out of the equation, and we think the best approach is through a commission. Forcing this issue onto the Senate agenda yet again would consume a good deal of time, and would probably result in a bill that could not pass anyway. The Feingold amendment would unwisely imply that this amendment should be the top priority of this Congress. We disagree, and therefore urge our colleagues to table it, and then vote in favor of the pending Dole amendment which more accurately indicates that campaign finance reform is only one of many priorities that should be considered.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

Though significant support for campaign finance reform can be found on both sides of the aisle, there has not been any indication that it will be considered this session. The Feingold amendment, therefore, has been offered to raise awareness of this issue by putting Senators on record as either being for or against consideration of campaign finance reform this year. The influence of money on elections needs to be restrained. No Member likes to have to go hat-in-hand to contributors, yet if they do not they have no chance of being able to mount a credible campaign. For challengers, the problem is even more severe. It is next to impossible for a person without financial influence to raise enough money to run for office. Unless a candidate can talk people with money into giving them hundreds of thousands of dollars for the House, and millions of dollars for the Senate, to run for office, they do not have a chance. Money is needed to get one's message out. The result is that campaigns are based more on who can raise the most money than on ideas and values.

Every year the cost of running for Congress rises. According to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), candidates for Congress spent a record \$724 million in last year's election. This amount is an astounding 62 percent more than was spent just 4 years earlier. Most of the increase was due to increased spending by candidates of their own money--in other words, the trend appears to be that running for Congress is going to be a right reserved for rich Americans. If we end up with a government of the rich by the rich, whom do we suppose it will be for?

Americans are very disillusioned with the political process. A primary cause of their disillusionment is that they can clearly see that political campaigns turn on money instead of principle. In the 1994 election, the voters demonstrated that they wanted reforms. The Senate should now vote to let the American people know that on the issue of campaign finance reform they do not intend to let them down.